Annual Report
January to December 1987

Occupational Health and Safety Council

Alberta
OCCUPATIONAL HEALTH AND SAFETY

90-00317/

Alberta

MINISTER RESPONSIBLE FOR
OCCUPATIONAL HEALTH AND SAFETY
AND THE WORKERS' COMPENSATION BOARD

420 Legislature Building, Edmonton, Alberta, Canada T5K 2B6 403/422-9613 Fax 403/422-5996

July, 1989

The Honourable Dr. David J. Carter
Speaker
Legislative Assembly of Alberta
325 Legislature Building
Edmonton, Alberta

Sir:

I have the honour to present the Annual Report of the Occupational Health and Safety Council for the calendar year 1987.

Respectfully submitted,

PETER TRYNCHY
Minister

Alberta
OCCUPATIONAL HEALTH AND
SAFETY COUNCIL

Donsdale Place, 10709 Jasper Avenue, Edmonton, Alberta, Canada T5J 3N3 403/427-6971 Facsimile 403/427-5698

July, 1989

Honourable Peter Trynchy
Minister Responsible for
Occupational Health and Safety
420 Legislature Building
Edmonton, Alberta

Dear Mr. Trynchy:

In accordance with the Occupational Health and Safety Act, the Occupational Health and Safety Council is pleased to present its Annual Report for the calendar year of 1987.

Respectfully submitted,

Maureen C. Shaw
Chairman

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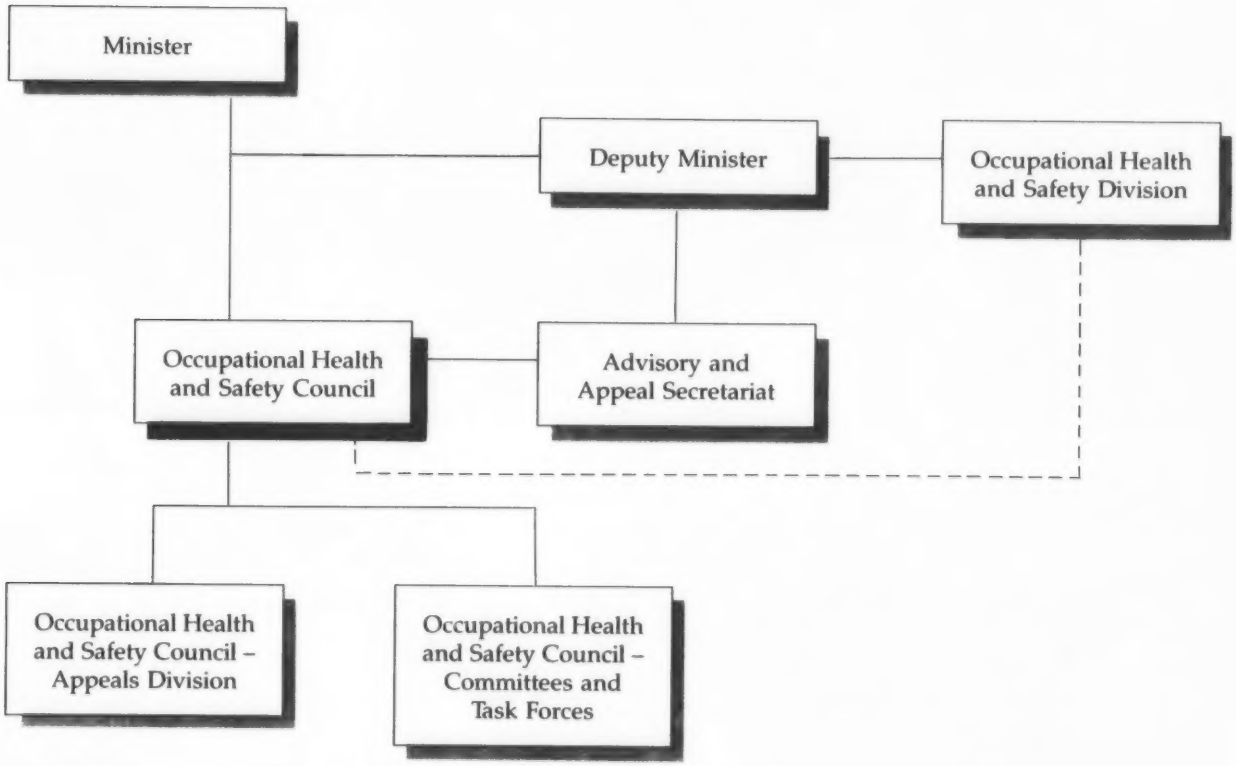
Occupational Health and Safety Council

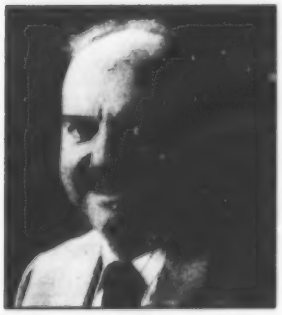
Alberta Community and Occupational Health


Minister
Deputy Minister
Occupational Health and Safety Division
Occupational Health and Safety Council
Advisory and Appeal Secretariat
Occupational Health and Safety Council – Appeals Division
Occupational Health and Safety Council – Committees and Task Forces

Maureen Shaw
CHAIRMAN
Bragg Creek
Public

Clayton Delbridge
MEMBER
Edmonton
Employer

Gus Bottas
MEMBER
Edmonton
Labour



Clint Dunford
MEMBER
Lethbridge
Employer

John Cowell
MEMBER
Calgary
Employer

Ron Jones
MEMBER
Edmonton
Employer

Sam Lee
MEMBER
Edmonton
Labour

Tom Whiting
MEMBER
Innisfail
Public

Phillip Oakes
MEMBER
Grande Cache
Labour

Jenny Malanchuk
Co-ordinator
Advisory and Appeal
Secretariat
Edmonton

About the council

History and Mandate

The Occupational Health and Safety Council was established by Order-in-Council in November 1976. Its 12 members represent employers, workers and the public.

The council's task is to advise the Minister of Community and Occupational Health, the Honourable Jim Dinning, on matters related to workers' health and safety in the province, and to perform any related duties and functions that may be assigned to council by the minister. The council is also empowered to hear appeals from orders issued by the Occupational Health and Safety Division.

Over the years, the council's most significant role has been to provide a forum for employers, employees and the general public to debate the critical issue of worker health and safety.

Relationship with the Occupational Health and Safety Division

While the Occupational Health and Safety Council is autonomous from the public service and reports directly to the minister, it enjoys a close working relationship with the Occupational Health and Safety Division, and appreciates the co-operation and support of Dr. Herb Buchwald, Managing Director of the Occupational Health and Safety Division, and division staff.

The Advisory and Appeal Secretariat

The Advisory and Appeal Secretariat provides administrative support to the boards and councils which report to the Minister of Community and Occupational Health. Jenny Malanchuk, co-ordinator of the secretariat, acts as secretary to the Occupational Health and Safety Council.

Standing Committees and Task Forces

The following standing committees and task forces were active in 1987:

Research
(The members of the research committee sit on the Occupational Health & Safety Heritage Grant Program Steering Committee)
Clayton Delbridge - Chairman
Ron Jones
Sam Lee
Phil Oakes

Small Business
Clint Dunford - Chairman
Tom Whiting

Legislative Review
Clint Dunford - Chairman
Gus Bottas
Phil Oakes

First Aid
John Cowell - Chairman
Tom Whiting

Review of Apprenticeship and Industry Training Task Force
Ron Jones
Maureen Shaw

Safe Communities Task Force
Maureen Shaw

Interprovincial Focus Group
Maureen Shaw

Safety in the Oil and Gas Drilling and Servicing Industries Task Force
John Cowell
Maureen Shaw
Tom Whiting

The year in review

A Strong and Active Council

The year 1986 marked the 10th anniversary of the Occupational Health and Safety Council. In reviewing its first decade, council reaffirmed its primary role for the next 10 years. It will continue to promote a safe and healthy workplace and to foster positive communications about workplace health and safety among labour, industry and government.

The Honourable Jim Dinning asked the council to be "strong and active," and encouraged the chairman to take the occupational health and safety message out to employers and workers and to the public. Accordingly, the chairman undertook to raise the profile of council. She spoke to groups around Alberta on the role of council and on the need for joint participation and commitment to the overall health and safety of Alberta workers.

Education

The minister and council share a deep commitment to education of the general public, employers and workers. This concern is part of the new vision of health promotion and the prevention of illness and injuries on and off the job. Council recognizes that the individual has an important role in safeguarding his own health and safety and that of his co-workers or employees. A well-informed person, whether worker or employer, is equipped to make choices which ensure a safe and healthy lifestyle.

As well as improving the quality of life for workers, a safer and more healthful work environment has a positive economic impact by keeping lost-time and health costs down.

Council supports the Occupational Health and Safety Division's new emphasis on education and promotion. Chief executive officers of companies will be encouraged to develop strategies that effect attitudes in a positive way. Raising the awareness of other government departments and agencies is also seen as important.

CURRENT ISSUES

During 1987, council at the request of the minister, examined a number of current issues in health and safety, with the objective of making related programs more effective and responsive. Much of the work in these areas was done through the various subcommittees and task forces of council and ratified at regular monthly meetings of council.

Safety in the Oil and Gas Drilling and Servicing Industries

A task force to examine accidents and fatalities in the oil and gas drilling and servicing industries was formed in response to the concern of both the minister and council about the increase in injuries and deaths within these industries.

The subcommittee examined the problem and made recommendations to the minister. It found a lack of health and safety training, knowledge and commitment in many drilling and service companies and in some oil and gas companies. Its recommendations included a number of strategies for the raising of awareness of health and safety among workers and management within these industries. A key recommendation was for better training of oil and gas field workers. Council worked closely throughout the year with the Occupational Health and Safety Division on a proposed *Plan of Action for the Prevention of Accidents in Selected Sectors of the Oil and Gas Industry*. Council's task force has become a standing committee and will continue to make recommendations on this issue.

As a positive response to the activities of the minister, council and the division, industry has established the Upstream Petroleum Industry Task Force on Safety, made up of senior executives and managers from the oil and and gas industry. This task force is expected to report to the government soon.

Petroleum Industry Training Service

Council members met with the Petroleum Industry Training Service executive director and chairman in order to share council's views regarding the importance of training programs. Council recommended that training should integrate good health and safety practices and be more responsive to small business needs. Discussions are continuing.

Apprenticeship Training

The minister requested that the chairman and vice-chairman make a presentation to the Apprenticeship Training Review Committee of Alberta Career Development and Employment. They stressed the need for safety training as an integral component of all apprenticeship programs and for the establishment of a training program for workers in the oil and gas drilling and servicing industries. Council recommended that ways of integrating good health and safety practices into apprenticeship training be examined.

Small Business

While only one-third of the employed labour force works for businesses with fewer than 40 employees, about 41 per cent of all lost-time accidents occur to employees of these small businesses. On average, the small employer injury rate is about 40 per cent higher than the large employer injury rate, although in some industry sectors the difference in rates is much larger: a 20:1 ratio in forestry and a 3:1 ratio in oil, gas, and mining, for example.

This is a difficult problem, for which there are no easy solutions. Council has been reviewing different approaches taken in other jurisdictions in Canada and abroad.

Council also reactivated its small business subcommittee, which had reported to the minister late in 1986. This committee examined the special needs of this sector, especially for health and safety information and services. The subcommittee will make recommendations in 1988 on specific strategies.

Workplace Hazardous Materials Information System

The Workplace Hazardous Materials Information System (WHMIS) is a new pan-Canadian hazard communication system dealing with chemicals used at work sites. The purpose of WHMIS is to ensure that workers are provided with the information they need about hazardous materials to which they may be exposed on the job. The system, which comes into effect October 31, 1988, has three main components: labels, materials safety data sheets and worker education.

Council was kept informed on the development of WHMIS, and offered advice in the areas of worker training and education, small business, and getting industry and organized labour involved . Council continued to stress the importance of public education about WHMIS, the need for more effective public relations, and the special problem of reaching workers who are not literate.

Safe Communities

Council has reviewed with interest a community-based pilot program carried out by the City of North Bay, Ontario, with the help of the Ontario Industrial Accident Prevention Association, called *Safe Community*. This approach to accident prevention both on and off the job involves the whole community in raising public awareness about safety and health. The major focus is on prevention and promotion at the community level. Council believes the Safe Community Model could have applications in Alberta and is consistent with the government's initiatives to strengthening the family and community.

Inter-provincial Focus Group

Through its chairman, council worked on the development of an interprovincial association or focus group for the sharing of information and strategies in the field of occupational health and safety. This group, representing all jurisdictions in Canada, would be brought together to look at solutions for common concerns, at a time when all jurisdictions are looking at new strategies for health promotion and illness prevention. There is support for the idea from most provinces, and it is anticipated that this group will be established in 1988.

Research

Four members of council sit as members of the steering committee of the Occupational Health and Safety Heritage Grant Program. This grant program supports research, training and education with the objectives of:

- preventing injuries and ill health resulting from employment; and
- promoting the health and well-being of Alberta workers through improved working conditions.

Council continues to support funding in the health and safety field within budget realities.

Legislative Review

Another function of the council is the review of health and safety legislation. During 1987, a procedure was set in place to allow for timely review by council. The legislative review subcommittee will be offering advice on changes to the Occupational Health and Safety Act to be presented in the 1988 session of the legislature.

Workers' Compensation Board

Council continues to support a close working relationship between the Workers' Compensation Board and the Occupational Health and Safety Division. Council's mandate does not allow for in-depth formal discussion on other Workers' Compensation Board issues, although council does offer advice when requested.

Appeal activities

Appeals

The role of the Occupational Health and Safety Council is unique. No other health and safety advisory body in Canada is also empowered to hear appeals. In accordance with Section 11 of the Occupational Health and Safety Act, council may:

- confirm, revoke or stay an order;
- confirm a cancellation or suspension;
- reinstate a cancelled licence;
- substitute a cancellation or suspension; or
- remove or vary a suspension.

The Occupational Health and Safety Council heard three appeals in 1987. A fourth was withdrawn. The appeals division was chaired by council member Sam Lee, and other members were selected to hear each appeal as it was received.

Appeals Heard in 1987

1. Ellis Don Management Services Ltd., Edmonton -- requirement for a nurse on site.
   Decision: Council confirmed and ordered compliance.

2. Car 2000 Auto Body Shop, Calgary -- requirement for proper circulation and respiratory equipment.
   Decision: Council ordered compliance.

3. Kerkoff Hyundai, Calgary -- requirement for codes of practice and requirement for rescue procedures and maintenance of equipment at the Oldman River dam site.
   Decision: Council ordered compliance.

4. Cadillac Fairview Corporation Ltd., Calgary -- requirement for a person designated to represent the principal contractor at the worksite (the Park Place Mall site, Lethbridge).
   The appeal was withdrawn and the order complied with.

Safety awards

Provincial Safety Awards

The Occupational Health and Safety Council assisted the minister in presenting 10 "Gold Hard Hat" and "Wise Owl" awards in 1987. These awards are presented to workers who show personal responsibility by wearing protective equipment that may have saved them from serious injury or death. The awards are sponsored jointly by Canada Safety Supply, the Canadian National Institute for the Blind and the Occupational Health and Safety Division. They are used to reinforce employer and government safety policies and to deliver the message of safety and its value to the individual worker.

The year ahead

Current and Emerging Issues

In the year ahead, council will continue to offer advice to the minister, at his request and on its own initiative, on current and emerging concerns affecting the health and safety of workers in Alberta.

Through the expertise of its own members and through consultation with other agencies and individuals, council will continue to act as a catalyst for better education of the general public, industry, workers and government. It will also maintain its ongoing partnership with the oil and gas drilling and servicing industries for the promotion of health and safety.

Council will bring together groups to establish positive attitudes toward the benefits of prevention. To further this aim, council will be developing a presentation to the Premier's Commission on Future Health Care for Albertans.

Council believes that an effective overall communications strategy is needed, with involvement from both within and outside the department. Council will collaborate with other agencies as necessary to develop this strategy.